



Hills Creek State Park

Located in scenic Tioga County, the 407-acre Hills Creek State Park abounds in wildlife. Osprey, loon and waterfowl visit the lake that boasts a variety of warm-water fish species. Camping, cabins, swimming and picnicking make this an ideal spot for a family vacation.

Directions

Hills Creek State Park, in northcentral Tioga County, is just north of US 6 and midway between Wellsboro and Mansfield. The park is also reached from PA 287 between the towns of Tioga and Wellsboro.

Reservations

Make online reservations at: www.visitPAparks.com or call toll-free 888-PA-PARKS (888-727-2757), 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Saturday, for state park information and reservations.

Recreational Opportunities



CAMPING: modern restrooms with showers

The 83-site camping area is at the north end of the park and can be reached by the main park road. The campsites range from grassy open areas to sites dominated by immense hemlock trees. The campground opens the second Friday in April and closes the third weekend in October.

Modern washhouses with warm showers, restrooms, and water fountains are in central locations throughout the camping area. A sanitary dump station is just outside the camping area. Seven sites are ADA accessible.

CAMPING COTTAGES: Three cottages sleep five people in single bunks and double/single bunks, and have wooden floors, windows, electric heat, porch, picnic table, fire ring and electric lights and outlets. Cottage 34 is ADA accessible.

YURTS: These Mongolian-style tents are round, on a wooden deck and sleep four people in two bunk beds. Yurts have a cooking stove, refrigerator, countertop, table, chairs, electric heat and outlets, fire ring, picnic table and are adjacent to a water pump.

CABINS: Ten modern cabins can be rented year-round. Cabins are furnished and have a living area, kitchen/dining area, shower and two bedrooms. Cabin seven is ADA accessible. Cabin renters should bring their own linens and kitchen utensils. Weekly reservations are required during the summer.

PICNICKING: There are two picnic areas and three reservable picnic pavilions. Picnic Area No. 1 is at the south

end of the lake near the breast of the dam. Picnic Area No. 2 is just north of the swimming beach along a large cove of the lake.

The picnic areas have picnic tables, charcoal grills or fireplaces, picnic pavilion, charcoal disposal units, centrally located drinking fountains and modern comfort stations. The picnic areas are open year-round, but all other day use facilities are closed seasonally. Picnic pavilions may be reserved up to 11 months in advance for a fee. Unreserved picnic pavilions are free on a first-come, first-served basis.

ORGANIZED GROUP TENTING: Qualified adult and youth groups may use this 40-person capacity area equipped with picnic tables, pavilion, fire rings, water and flush toilets. Campers may shower in the campground. This wooded peninsula is open from the second Friday in April to the third Sunday in October, weather permitting. Advance reservations are recommended. Some of the larger hemlock, beech, maple and ash trees in the park are found on this very picturesque peninsula.

BOATING: electric motors only

The 137-acre Hills Creek Lake has three boat mooring areas with a total capacity of 30 boats. Two of these areas also double as boat launching areas with concrete launching ramps. Boat rentals from the concession are available from Memorial Day to Labor Day, weather permitting.

Motorboats must display a boat registration from any state. Non-powered boats must display one of the following: boat registration from any state; launching permit or mooring permit from Pennsylvania State Parks that are available at most state park offices; launch use permit from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

FISHING: The warm waters of the 137-acre Hills Creek Lake provide excellent fishing for warm-water species. Common fish are muskellunge, largemouth bass, carp, bullhead catfish, bluegill, crappie and yellow perch. The lake record for largemouth bass is just over eight pounds. A valid PA fishing license is required. All Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission laws apply.

ICE FISHING: Ice fishing success in the 137-acre Hills Creek Lake is exceptional for yellow perch, bluegill and an occasional walleye. Be safety conscious when on the ice.

SWIMMING: A sand beach is open from late-May to mid-September, 8 a.m. to sunset. Swim at your own risk. The sandy lake bottom and grass beach are quite popular. The modern bathhouse and snackbar/boat rental are nearby and open seasonally.

GEOCACHING: In this high tech treasure hunting game a Web site lists hidden containers called geocaches that players using GPS devices locate outdoors.

Hills Creek hosts a geocache for the Legacy of Conservation Geocaching Trail. Collect all 30 cards of notable Pennsylvania environmentalists to receive a special coin.

HUNTING: Hills Creek State Park is closed to hunting because of its small size, but there is an abundance of nearby public lands available for this popular sport, including the 13,000 acres of rugged State Game Land 37 within walking distance.

HIKING: 5 miles of trails

Lake Side Trail - 2.5 miles, more difficult hiking

This trail begins at the entrance to the camping area and follows the lake shore in a westerly direction for about one mile, finally arriving at the Beaver Hut Boating Area. A beaver house plus many signs of beaver activity may be seen in this area. From the boating area the trail generally follows the lake shore in a southerly direction for about one mile, ending at the dam breast of Hills Creek Lake. This section of the trail offers an excellent variety of bird life attracted by seeds from white spruce, red-osier dogwood and viburnums that dominate this moist area. The trail then follows the park road past Picnic Area No. 1 and the park office. It ends at a parking lot beyond the gate on the main entrance road, a distance of about 0.5 mile. Following half of Tauschers Trail will lead hikers back to their starting point.

Tauscher's Trail - 1.5 miles, easiest hiking

This trail circles the northeast section of the park from the cabin area. It winds through pine plantations, dense stands of alder and areas containing numerous wildflowers. Wildlife abounds in this section of the park and it is not uncommon to startle deer or grouse along the trail.

Yellow Birch Trail - 1 mile, easiest hiking

This trail starts at the entrance to the camping area but travels in an easterly direction for about one mile. Although short in length, this trail leads through a diversity of forest habitats from stands of hardwoods to hemlock swamps and marsh areas. The observant hiker may see a variety of wildlife and animal signs along with interesting tree development.

Tell us about your hike at: www.ExplorePAtrails.com.

Environmental Education and Interpretation

The park operates a seasonal visitor center in the camping area. A variety of interpretive programs are offered between the Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends. For a list of major events and programs visit www.visitPAparks.com.

History

The land, originally known as Kellys Swamp, was purchased in 1950. Within this swamp, at the present location of the swimming beach, was a small mine from which pigment for the paint industry was extracted. The park opened in 1953 and is named for the creek that runs through it. The stream was named after Captain William Hill who settled in the area around 1820.

Wildlife Watching

Wildlife abounds in and around Hills Creek State Park. Along with an active beaver colony, there are other water-loving creatures including muskrat, wood duck, great blue heron and osprey. Bald eagles are frequent visitors to the park.

Visitors may see a transient black bear, a flock of wild turkey or a deer. Hills Creek is also a perfect habitat for rabbits, grouse, pileated woodpeckers and woodchucks.

In the spring, Hills Creek Lake becomes home to migrating waterfowl like loon, bufflehead and common merganser.

Hills Creek Lake

The focal point of the park is a 137-acre lake developed by impounding Hills Creek. The earth dam, built by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, is 34 feet high and 422 feet long. The basin of Hills Creek Lake is long and narrow ending in an irregular triangle at the north end. The elevation is 1,486 feet and the nearby mountains rise to an elevation of 2,200 feet.

The temperatures and chemical characterizations of the lake support a good warm-water fishery.

The general area now covered by water has almost continually, since the end of the last ice age, been under the influence of beaver dams and beavers. Beavers still abound in the area, including in Hills Creek Lake. The depth of the beaver marsh (vegetation and sediment) is as great as 20 feet deep.

Nearby Attractions

For information on nearby attractions, contact the Tioga County Visitors Bureau. www.visittiogapa.com

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has recreational facilities around the Tioga and Hammond dams that are six miles north of the park. Also, Leonard Harrison and Colton Point state parks (the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon) are 18 miles west of Hills Creek.

Explore Pennsylvania Wilds

Pennsylvania Wilds is two million acres of public lands for hiking, biking, fishing, boating, hunting and exploration in northcentral Pennsylvania.

Highlights of the area are elk watching, scenic PA 6, Pine Creek Gorge (PA Grand Canyon), the darkest skies in the east at Cherry Springs State Park, and hundreds of miles of backpacking trails, bike paths and trout fishing streams. www.pawilds.com

Access for People with Disabilities

 This symbol indicates facilities and activities that are accessible. This publication text is available in alternative formats.

If you need an accommodation to participate in park activities due to a disability, please contact the park you plan to visit.

In an Emergency

Contact a park employee or dial 911. For directions to the nearest hospital, look on bulletin boards or at the park office.

NEAREST HOSPITAL

Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hospital
32-36 Central Avenue
Wellsboro, PA 16901
570-723-7764

pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND NATURAL RESOURCES



For More Information Contact:

Hills Creek State Park
111 Spillway Road
Wellsboro, PA 16901-9676
570-724-4246

e-mail: hillscreeksp@state.pa.us
An Equal Opportunity Employer

www.visitPAparks.com

Information and Reservations

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